

# *A Message for Family Members*

## **Your support makes our success possible**

Greetings from Kosovo. By now I expect family and loved ones have heard of the events that occurred this past week in Kosovo.

All of the Soldiers performed exceptionally well to restore order, quell the riots, and reestablish a safe and secure environment here in Kosovo. We continue to take steps to prevent a reoccurrence of the riots and violence.

This effort has brought an increased demand on all Soldiers in terms of hours and days worked. You can be assured that our leadership continually seeks procedures to consolidate mission requirements and effort to decrease our Soldiers' work load.

We have temporarily cancelled the Fighter Management Pass Program and Greek Spiritual Retreat until we know all additional mission requirements are met. The command group is committed to the safety and well-being of all our Soldiers. We look forward to the day that these soldier programs will be reinstated.

Families and loved ones should be extremely proud of their Soldier(s). They are the most important part of this Task Force. From the beginning of this deployment in October 2003, this group of citizen soldiers from across our nation came together and have accomplished everything asked of them. They are truly national treasures. This wouldn't have hap-



**Lt. Col. David Larsen,  
Deputy Chief of Staff**

pened without your love, patience, and understanding. Your support during these demanding times is critical to our success here in Kosovo and at home.

Thank you for all that you do. Please work with your Family Support Group coordinators if you have suggestions on ways to better communicate with each other or to include Family Support Group stories here in Kosovo.

# Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry

Anything is possible when patrolling the streets of Kosovo, and for the members of Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry, the extensive training that prepared them for deployment never covered the boldness of poultry.

"I've been to the country, but I haven't seen 30 chickens cross in front of your Humvee," said Sgt. Jason Ottum, the acting squad leader for the patrol, as the feathery flock passed by during his fourth patrol in Kosovo.

Despite the unexpected interruption from farm animals,

Ottum and his Soldiers said they found themselves well prepared for the reality of a Kosovo deployment because of the months of training they received. Included in their training experience was speaking through interpreters, finding hidden weapons caches, and interacting with local residents, he said.

"We had a lot of training so I think it helped us blend pretty seamlessly into Kosovo," said Ottum. "When we were practicing, it was more of the worst case sce-

nario where we went into the town and the town was angry with us."

Training for the worst was good practice, Ottum said, but the situation they found when they performed a vehicle checkpoint was completely different. While one driver's credentials were checked,

a child in the back seat smiled, waved, yelled excitedly towards the troops, and eagerly accepted candy from an outstretched hand attached to a camouflage-sleeved arm.

Along with the candy the Soldiers bring their hopes of understanding local culture and maintaining a lasting peace in Kosovo. After the checkpoint, the squad moved to the Kosovo Police Station in Vitina/Viti to introduce themselves and find out what the area was like from the experts. Doing so, Ottum said, would help Soldiers like himself know what to look for when patrolling.

It was the fourth patrol for the team and it involved chickens, children, the KPS and situations far friendlier than their training, and the experiences inspired at

least one of the Soldiers to connect further with the area.

"I'd like to learn the language and a couple more words than just saying hello," said Pfc. Chua Lor, a driver with the patrol.

At the start of a new rotation, anything is possible.



*Spc. Justin Johnson, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry, checks a driver's registration at a vehicle checkpoint in Viti/Vitina.*



## Visit Our Website

[www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil](http://www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil)

for more pictures, stories, and information about the Soldiers.





## Alpha Company, 1-207th Aviation

**K**eeping the peace in Kosovo is often a new experience for the Soldiers called to the task. They meet new people, encounter unfamiliar cultures and customs, and perform missions they may not have performed before training for their time with KFOR. For members of the Alaska Army National Guard's Alpha Company, 1-207th Aviation, this trip to Kosovo is different for another reason.

"This is the first Title 10 activation [mobilized for active duty military] deployment for the [Alaska] Army Guard in our state ever," said 1st Lt. John Stout, a platoon leader and pilot with the company who normally lives in Anchorage, Alaska.

Since arriving in February, the unit has been busy.

"We do a lot of VIP transport and reconnaissance to see the [infantry] area of responsibility," said Stout. "We also do training with the infantry. Sometimes they might want to be inserted by helicopter for training benefit."

A recent mission was both familiar and new for the aviators as they provided transportation for



*Staff Sgt. Arturo Bautista, a crew chief with Alaska Army National Guard's Alpha Company, 1-207th Aviation, and Anchorage resident, ensures the UH-60 Blackhawk's Danish passengers are prepared for their flight to their training area.*

Norwegian soldiers conducting a training exercise in an abandoned town.

"This was a fairly routine mission for us," said Chief Warrant Officer Chuck Hosack, a pilot who is also from Anchorage. "The only thing that made it different was we worked with the Norwegians."

Working with the non-U.S. troops provided a new experience for the Americans.

"I haven't dealt with many units like that in the past and it gave us an opportunity to learn what a unit like that needs as far as aviation support, types of planning, and landing zones that haven't been surveyed," said Stout.

The Alaskans learned other les-

sons, as well.

"The previous day we had rehearsals so I got to talk to the platoon leader. It was great for me to get to talk to their leadership and interact with them to see what type of planning they were doing," Stout said.

The unit members said all these new experiences and lessons will benefit their unit.

"I expect we will all come away from this mission feeling good about how we have done. I expect a lot of people in our company will have become more proficient and experienced as pilots," said Stout. "I think this deployment will give them the opportunity to work on areas they didn't get to before."



# **Bullhorn** From the Families

Welcome to the first issue of the Bullhorn, the newsletter for families of Soldiers deployed to Multi-national Brigade (East) in Kosovo.

This biweekly publication will bring you messages and stories from the Soldiers of MNB(E) and provide useful information, as well as give you the chance to share information of your own.

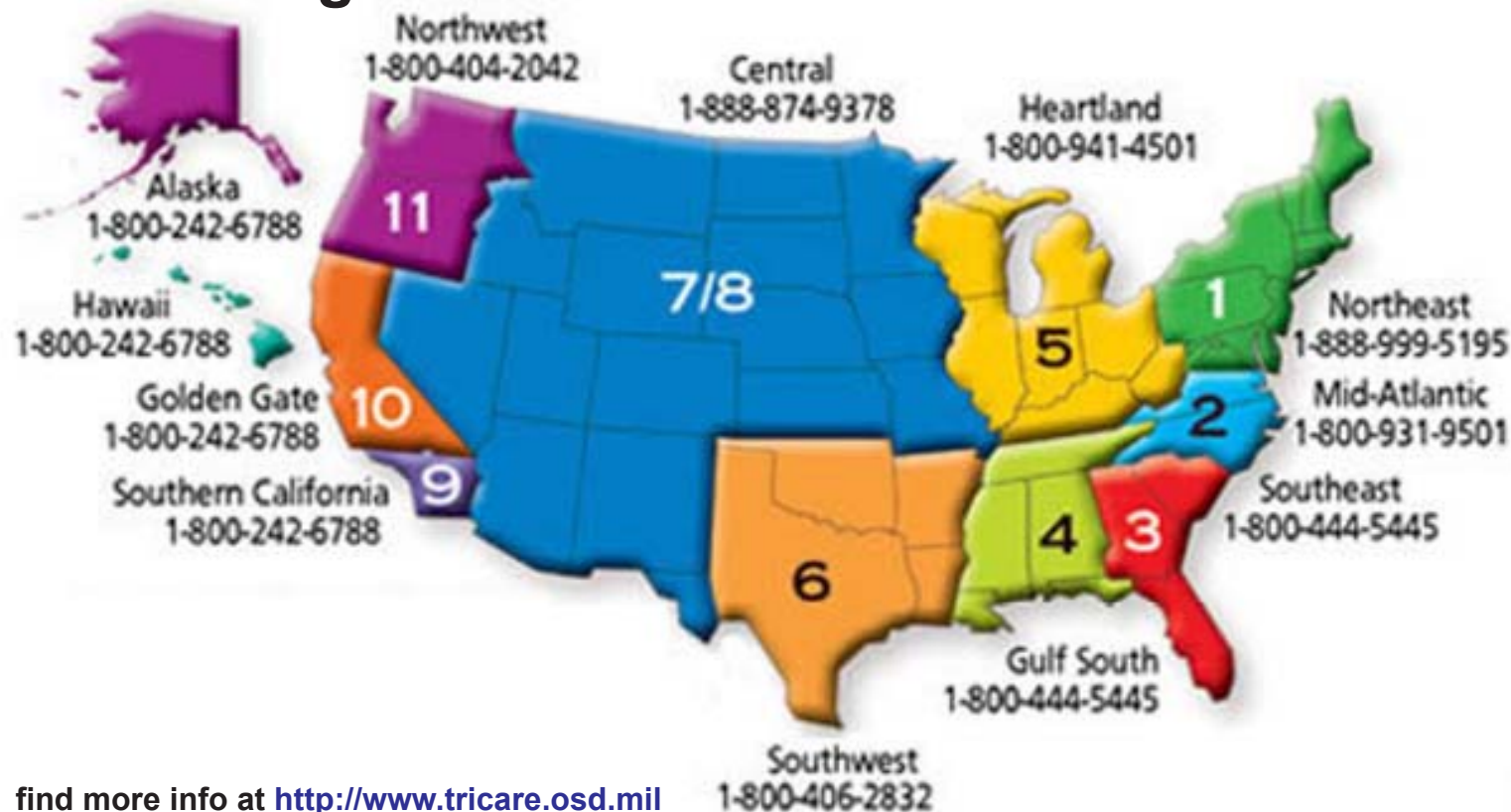
This section is for you, the family members, to share news and information with the other families of Soldiers deployed to Kosovo.

You can share your stories of life at home or tips for making the separation easier. Let the other families know about the useful resources you've found or what challenges you encountered and how you overcame them. You can even ask other families for advice or just share your family news.

To submit news and information for this section, you can either give it to your Family Support Group representative or email it to the Family Support point of contact in Kosovo at:  
FSGKosovo@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil

## **Bullhorn** Important Information

### Tricare Regional 24-hour Toll-Free numbers



### Contacting the Red Cross

Members of the National Guard and Reserves, retirees and civilians may access Red Cross services through their local Red Cross chapter. Red Cross chapters are listed in local telephone books and on the American Red Cross Web site at:

<http://www.redcross.org/where/where.html>

When calling the Red Cross to send an emergency message to a family member, please have

ready the following information which will speed the process of sending your message:

- Service Member's Full Name
- Rank
- Branch of Service
- Social Security Number
- Military Address
- Information about the deployed unit